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ABSTRACT

Activities conducted by the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Needs (BSN) Division of Occupational Education designed to strengthen communication between BSN central staff and regional staff, and to explain more fully to the regional staff the goals and priorities for service to the disadvantaged and handicapped, are described in this handbook. Focus is on demonstrating how the BSN advocacy position works to assure better service to target groups through equitable distribution of funds. Since proposals are submitted requesting funds, the handbook suggests how BSN can meet its obligation to offer technical assistance and encouragement in the design and submission of proposals for funds from deprived areas. Design of disadvantaged programs is discussed as a guide for planning a strong proposal. Characteristics of a program for special needs are summarized as flexible, strong in the area of supportive services, encompassing all types of vocational education programs, and public or nonpublic. Several currently approved projects for the handicapped are described to exemplify cooperative efforts between BSN and existing collaborative programs and schools serving the handicapped. Seminars, workshops, and meetings involving community agencies and parent groups are suggested to meet the need for occupational education information resources within the community. Monitoring and evaluation are discussed to show what the BSN expects and how it will administer programs for persons with special needs. (TA)

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ED 151 533

**OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION
FOR SPECIAL NEEDS —
WHAT IT IS , HOW IT WORKS;
A HANDBOOK FOR
REGIONAL STAFF**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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PREFACE — BUREAU OF SPECIAL NEEDS WORKSHOPS

During the months of September and October 1976 the Bureau of Special Needs held a series of workshops at the six Regional Offices across the state in the first of a series of activities designed to strengthen the lines of communication between the BSN central staff and the regional personnel. At each meeting the professional staff of the Bureau of Special Needs undertook to explain more fully to the regional staff personnel the goals and priorities for service to the disadvantaged and handicapped during the coming year and to hear questions and concerns of special interest to the region. Included also in the presentations was at least one speaker from the region who could bring a particular perspective to activities in that area.

The reception accorded the Bureau of Special Needs staff has been so encouraging and the dialogue so positive that we plan a series of follow-up conferences. We hope that this beginning will prove to be that of a closer and more effective working relationship between the Bureau of Special Needs central staff and the Regional Offices.



Mrs. Amanda Houston

OVERVIEW

The Bureau of Special Needs is and must be essentially an advocacy group. The target population is made up of disadvantaged and handicapped students. These are students who traditionally have been shortchanged by the regular education system. They are, moreover, students who can be made self-sufficient and productive only if they are given special help in the form of modified programs and strong support services. Perhaps the most immediate and effective way of helping these groups to become contributing members of society is to give them, through high quality occupational education, the means and skills for self-support and, ultimately, for self-respect.

Disadvantaged and handicapped students are to be found all across the state, but the heaviest concentrations of these students are in the most densely populated urban areas of Massachusetts. This problem is compounded by many large city systems being older and less well equipped in vocational areas than newer suburban schools or regional vocational technical schools which serve a much smaller and more select student body. For these reasons, it is important that the Bureau of Special Needs assume a strong advocacy role in the effort toward equalization of access and opportunity for the disadvantaged and handicapped groups as defined under federal law.

The funds dispersed by the Bureau of Special Needs are the most sought after within the entire Division of Occupational Education. Some *nine* proposals are submitted for every *one* for which funds make a grant award possible.

It is clear that we can no longer fail to deliver services to those who need them. In the past, funds were allocated in such a way that the spirit of the law was circumvented. What was lacking was not distribution of funds but *equitable* distribution of funds. This situation was particularly unfortunate because it almost necessarily set up a competitive situation among groups—the handicapped vs. the disadvantaged, the cities vs. the suburbs, the regional vocational technical schools vs. the comprehensive high schools. The Bureau of Special Needs assuming an

advocacy position should not be interpreted as a wish to deprive any groups of funds. The Bureau hopes, rather, that the unserved, the disadvantaged, and other target groups be better served than they have been in the recent past.

A recent report by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center charges that although federal law mandates that vocational education funds and programs shall focus upon the economically and educationally disadvantaged, particularly those groups in economically depressed areas and in areas with high rates of school drop-outs and unemployment, these groups and areas presently receive a disproportionately small share of vocational monies, as well as poorer quality programs. The report suggests further that "in numerous instances, this fact is a direct result of policies and practices of state and local school officials." For example, the suburban, regional vocational schools, which serve some 11 or 12% of all students in vocational education, receive the lion's share of federal funds for vocational education—somewhere around 55%. Because member towns served by a fine modern regional vocational-technical school recognize a financial commitment to these schools, and because, in most cases there is more efficiently administered money, these schools are able to provide a wider variety of high-quality programs. Such schools are to be commended for the job they are doing. However, the state's concentration upon these schools, and the policies of the Division of Occupational Education which created that concentration, penalize the comprehensive and trade or technical schools. Thus, "instead of operating to offset the expected urban-suburban disparity due to tax base and income differences between cities and suburbs, the division has *increased* that disparity."

The underrepresentation of minority, female, and handicapped students in regional-technical schools and the relative inequality of funds allocated to schools in areas where disadvantaged students live make it clear that the manner in which funds are allocated by the Division of Occupational Education penalizes comprehensive high schools and urban trade or technical schools. This funding pattern results in those schools which most need assistance getting the least. It is an

illogical pattern running counter to priorities established by federal law and state policy.

In many instances, fewer and lower quality proposals are submitted from depressed areas, particularly those areas with very large, politically burdened school systems. Having admitted this fact, what remains as an obligation for the Division? If politics or even incompetence are at the root of inability to compete for occupational education funds, it is, nevertheless, the students who pay the price. A clear obligation then on the part of the Division generally and of the Bureau of Special Needs particularly is to offer technical assistance and encouragement in the design and submission of proposals from these deprived areas. Again, such activities would be an attempt to bring ourselves more in compliance with federal and state mandates.

It is also possible to creatively approach the problem of inferior facilities and tired programs. In many instances there have been encouraging signs of cooperation between school systems and private agencies, which have facilities and equipment or the means of obtaining them through cooperation with local industry, to provide some portion of vocational training for students within the system. Such an approach has the happy result of involving the school, the community, and the business and commercial resources in a joint enterprise.

Furthermore, we must re-evaluate our definition of *disadvantaged*. At the present time most urban students in Massachusetts are disadvantaged. Almost 70% of Massachusetts students are concentrated in the cities. This socio economic group has suffered from poverty and from schools inadequately equipped to serve them properly. If we are to deal with the situation realistically, the pool of resources for disadvantaged students must be greatly expanded and other strengths and facilities utilized to this end.

Vocational education as defined by Massachusetts law is an "education of which the primary purpose is to fit pupils for profitable employment." The Bureau of Special Needs would like to work more closely with the regional staffs to aid disadvantaged and handicapped persons throughout the Commonwealth to realize this goal.

MANDATE

The advocacy position which the Bureau of Special Needs assumes is based solidly on its legal mandate. The BSN was established on July 1, 1969 under Chapter 837 of the Massachusetts General Laws, pursuant to the Vocational Act of 1963, as amended under P.L. 90-576 and P.L. 92-318. It came into being as an instrument to enable the Commonwealth to comply with federal and local regulations governing delivery of occupational training to disadvantaged and handicapped persons. The Director of the Bureau, according to the State Operational Plan, "has the general responsibility for the disadvantaged and handicapped" and further, he/she "arranges for cooperation by maintaining liaison with all agencies dealing with these people for training and education."

Clearly, the responsibilities and the scope of this task are tremendous. The Board of Education recognizes this basic problem in articulating the present six objectives of the Division of Occupational Education for FY 1977. From the first of these, all the others derive:

1. "A greater number of youths and adults will receive occupational education with special emphasis on those presently unserved or underserved."

The second is essentially a development and clarification of number one.

2. "Access to vocational education(trade, technical, and occupational fields requiring specialized skills for entry) will be increased for minorities, handicapped, and female students."

Here it is useful to address oneself to the matter of definitions. The term, *Special Needs*, is sometimes confused with *Special Education*. *Special Needs*, under the law, concerns itself with disadvantaged and handicapped persons. Educators who deal with the handicapped are, in many ways, better organized than those who deal with the amorphous group designated "the disadvantaged." There are many reasons why this should be so.

Requirements for teacher certification in the area of special education are more clearly defined. There is more and better specialized literature on the subject. And the population is easier, in most cases, to identify. A blind child cannot see, or sees with considerable difficulty. Other physical problems usually make themselves evident at a relatively early stage of development. Mental and many types of emotional handicaps are distinctly more *measurable* than those problems which serve to define a student as "disadvantaged." Consequently the methods of dealing with those problems are more organized, more specialized, perhaps more codified, and therefore more amenable to being transmitted to educators who deal with students having particular types of learning handicaps. A later section will discuss BSN activities in relation to this group.

But who really are the *disadvantaged*? The term is perhaps an unfortunate one because in ordinary conversation it is something less than precise. We can all point to some way in which we are "disadvantaged." But the term as it is used within the context of vocational education does have a more precise definition. According to federal definition, "disadvantaged persons" means persons who have:

"academic
socioeconomic
cultural
or
other handicaps

that prevent them from succeeding in vocational education or consumer and homemaking programs designed for persons with such handicaps, and who for that reason require specially designed educational programs or related services. The term includes persons whose needs for such programs or services result from:

"poverty
neglect
delinquency
or

cultural or linguistic isolation from the community at large . . ."
(*Federal Register* of 1970)

Clearly this definition embraces students with a wide range of problems which demand a wide range of solutions. In fact, the very magnitude of the task encourages educators to turn away from it and to direct their energies and resources toward a more definable and contained population. Nevertheless both federal and state laws and regulations demand that we address ourselves to the problems of this population. These then are the goals and priorities of the BSN—to carry out the legal mandates to provide the highest possible quality occupational education to this target group in the greatest possible numbers.

Furthermore, the Vocational Education Act of 1968 requires every state which desires to receive federal funds for vocational education to submit a state plan. This plan must assure that:

due consideration will be given to the relative vocational education needs of all population groups in all geographic areas and communities in the state, particularly persons with academic, socioeconomic, mental or physical handicaps that prevent them from succeeding in regular vocational education programs. (VEA, 1968)

The Act specifies five categories which constitute the "Target Areas":

1. economically depressed areas
2. areas with high rates of unemployment
3. areas with high rates of school dropouts
4. areas with the greatest population density, and
5. areas with high rates of youth unemployment

There is no doubt that in every Massachusetts region these special needs populations are to be found. This is the population which the Bureau of Special Needs is mandated to serve. We believe that a closer working relationship between the central office staff and a more thorough understanding of the laws and regulations which govern our activities will help us toward this end.

It is our intention then — it is our goal and objective under federal law and state regulations — to work toward equalizing funding patterns which in the past have made for underrepresentation of disadvantaged, including minority,



bilingual, and female, and of handicapped in quality occupational programs. The shocking rate of unemployment, particularly among the young, among minorities, among women, among those with limited English-speaking testifies that vocational education in Massachusetts is failing to accomplish its goals. From a purely practical point, the high cost of dealing with the unemployment situation, both in economic and human terms, is enormous.

The categories which comprise our target population tend to overlap—

handicapped
female
minority
limited English-speaking

But all of these groups whose members cannot succeed in regular programs are victims. Whether circumstances have made a child deaf, or whether circumstances that determined that a child is born into poverty, into a family that does not understand the so-called middle-class oriented school system, if that child has been badly educated in inadequate schools, he operates under a severe handicap, just as does the child with cerebral palsy.

Moreover, for the disadvantaged student, many people do not experience that immediate rush of sympathy inspired by the so-called handicapped child. Frequently the disadvantaged student perceives educators and the educational system as hostile to him. He has learned one thing well — to fail and to expect failure. It is our job to provide settings and situations in which the disadvantaged child can succeed. When we do, we will be carrying out our primary function as educators. We will be turning out a person who can become a productive, contributing member of society. We will be fulfilling our mandate under the law. It is to this end that the Bureau of Special Needs intends to strive.

DESIGN OF DISADVANTAGED PROGRAMS

The following paragraphs are intended as a guide to those wishing to secure funds from the Bureau of Special Needs. These guidelines parallel those mandated by the federal government. They are intended to provide the framework around which a strong proposal can be built. They should be read and re-read before any project development is planned.

P.L. 90-756 is restrictive in specifying eligibility for the disadvantaged or handicapped to avoid dissipation or commingling of earmarked funds in regular vocational education programs. However once a person is identified as needing special help to succeed, the form or type of vocational education activities authorized to overcome the disadvantage or handicap is essentially unrestricted.

Whenever possible, disadvantaged/handicapped persons should be integrated into regular vocational education programs. Ancillary or supportive services needed to help a person succeed in these programs, then, may be provided by federal funds. In reality, however, often it is more effective or beneficial to the students to set up for them separate or modified programs.

Since disadvantaged/handicapped students are "hard-to-reach" and "hard-to-teach," programs designed specifically for them are usually different from regular vocational education programs. Some characteristics of the program for the special needs can be summarized as follows:

1. *The design of the program is flexible.* Unlike the regular program which usually sets up standards on curriculum, schedules, group rate of progress, and requirements for enrollment, the program for the special needs is more flexible in its operational structure. Curriculum and rate of progress should be geared to individual needs, and ability. Whenever necessary, the program schedules can be arranged either for regular school hours or after-school hours, evenings, or even weekends to

take in those who may have also failed in regular programs.

2. *The program should include a strong component in the area of supportive services.* Supportive services in some forms should be provided for disadvantaged/handicapped students to assist them in succeeding in the program. These services should include:

- A. *Counseling and Guidance*

Including educational counseling, vocational assessment/orientation and counseling, and often personal counseling and visits to parents.

- B. *Tutorial Instruction*

Basic skills of reading and computation abilities often need to be upgraded through tutorial instruction on an individual basis.

- C. *Out-reach Efforts*

Many of the special needs persons are hard-to-reach. Often they are isolated by their own ignorance of available opportunities or an ingrained sense of failure. Special efforts should be made to reach these persons and bring them into programs through some specific efforts, such as media, workshops, or contact visits.

- D. *Placement Assistance*

The special needs persons are also disadvantaged or handicapped in lacking information about how most successfully to seek jobs. Specific assistance in placement should be provided to individuals through a job developer or placement counselor.

- E. *Bilingual Services*

For persons who have limited English ability, skills training and related supportive services are, in many cases, more

effectively conducted, at least in part, in their native language. Along with the bilingual instruction, English as a second language instruction also has to be provided.

3. *The program for the Special Needs student encompasses all types of vocational education programs:*
 - A. Exploratory or pre-vocational program
 - B. Skills training programs
 - C. Supportive services
 - D. Combinations of all the above
4. *Facilities for the special needs program can be public or nonpublic.*

There is no rigid limitation on the use of facilities for the programs. Public vocational schools, comprehensive high schools, community colleges all may provide facilities for training. Sometimes, private nonprofit schools or agencies can be contracted to provide facilities and training when these services are not available in the public schools.



HANDICAPPED PROGRAMS

Among those students presently unserved or underserved by programs of vocational and occupational education are those with physical, emotional or intellectual impairments requiring some form of special service. In contrast to the relative concentration of disadvantaged persons in large urban areas, handicapped persons tend to be found throughout the Commonwealth. From an educational point of view the incidence of particular handicapping conditions (e.g., deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed, and so forth) has had the effect of diffusing services to these persons such that the costs for such programs, where they existed, were extremely high. In order to provide more effective services for these students it became apparent that various cities and towns would have to pool their resources to provide the type of services required. Similarly, the concentration of federal and state funds would have to be directed toward those communities and schools that demonstrated a willingness to collaborate in serving handicapped persons.

The Bureau of Special Needs, in order to facilitate the needs of handicapped persons, worked to establish collaboratives in various regions across the Commonwealth. Initially, these efforts were concentrated on existing collaborative programs and those schools who had historically met their obligations for serving this population. By increasing the available resources to established collaboratives it was reasoned that such programs would serve a greater number of students in a more cost effective manner.

During Fiscal Year 1977 eight programs were approved by the Board of Education to serve handicapped students in occupational and vocational education. Geographically these programs are distributed across the Commonwealth from Berkshire County to Cape Cod. The projects range from late afternoon programs such as developed at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational to a totally integrated model as provided by Cape Cod Vocational. Programs include such areas as culinary arts, automotive, technology, auto body, machine shop, painting and decorating.

Although these initial efforts have concentrated on expanding existing collaboratives or programs in participating schools, new collaboratives must be established. In addition, urban school systems, comprehensive schools and those schools in rural and suburban areas must receive increasing technical assistance in the development of programs for handicapped special needs students.

The problems associated with integrating handicapped students into the mainstream of society is a major role which vocational and occupational education programs can play. These programs, however, will require personnel trained not only in the vocational or occupational disciplines, but who have the experience, training and education for working with a variety of handicapped students. Counselors, curriculum developers, and a variety of other specialists will have to be available in the future to meet the needs of these persons.

By working cooperatively with the Division of Special Education through the Core Evaluation process, teacher training institutions, community service agencies, parent groups and others, the Bureau of Special Needs hopes to increase both the range and type of services available to handicapped persons in vocational and occupational education. Our initial efforts have proved promising. The need to expand our efforts, through wider distribution of resources to schools and agencies willing to take on this important task, is critical. Therefore, the Bureau will assume a much greater role with the aid of regional teams in the identification and funding of programs of occupational and vocational education for the handicapped.

During the summer of 1975 Mr. Daniel Donoghue met with a former Associate Commissioner of the Division of Occupational Education, and the Director of that Division's Bureau of Special Needs, Mrs. Amanda Houston. Mr. Donoghue was asked to assist Mrs. Houston in the coordination of her effort in the development and expansion of occupational education programming for handicapped students.

On July 1, 1975 Mr. Donoghue accepted this challenge of coordinating occupational education programs for the handicapped by assuming the directorship of a federal project



funded through the Bureau of Special Needs of the Division of Occupational Education.

Project OPTION (Occupational Programs to Insure Opportunities Now) has as its major goal the delivery of vocational services to all students with special needs who choose this type of education. To implement this goal, collaboratives will be developed around existing vocational facilities. The collaboratives will be designed to encompass all ongoing academic systems as well. It was reasoned that such consolidation will result in greater cost effectiveness and increased service delivery.

About the same time of Project OPTION's inception, another project funded through the state's Division of Special Education was approved and located at the Massachusetts Center for Occupational Education. This project, Project PROD, under the direction of Dr. Katherine Best, had as its principal mandate the development and expansion of educational programs for handicapped students considered in the categories of low-incidence in the total handicapped population. Certain visually and auditorially impaired and multi-handicapped students are recognized as being in this low-incidence group.

Projects PROD and OPTION, exemplifying cooperative efforts between the Division of Occupational Education and Special Education are known as the ALPHA group.

The ALPHA Group is committed to addressing the following areas:

1. Planning and program development in occupational education for students with special needs.
2. Planning for the low-incidence disabilities population in the state.
3. Training of CET personnel in vocational assessment techniques.
4. Continued in-service for teachers and program support for students with moderate and severe special needs.

As explained by staff members of the Division of Occupational Education Bureau of Special Needs, Mrs. Amanda Houston is the Bureau's Director. Her responsibilities and authority encompass the areas of occupational education programming for both disadvantaged and handicapped children. At times there seems to be some confusion regarding the term "special needs students." In the Bureau of Special Needs, the term includes the disadvantaged as well as the handicapped student. But, within the Division of Special Education, a special needs student is defined as a child with a handicapping condition.

money allocated for each project. Mrs. Houston and Mr. Donoghue determined that the optimal development of appropriate occupational education programs for the handicapped might best be accomplished by allowing for the granting of large sums of money for fewer but more well-defined projects. The approved project applicants would be required to provide a comprehensive report of successes and failures encountered during the project's tenure. Then the representative models, if proven successful, could be adapted by other vocational/technical high schools initiating programs for the handicapped.

During the current school year eight projects concerned with occupational education for handicapped students have been approved for funding. Geographically they are well distributed across the Commonwealth, from Berkshire County to Cape Cod

Regional Vocational/Technical in Harwich and are funded for approximately \$90,000 each.

The types of projects range from late afternoon programs such as that developed by Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational/Technical in Upton to a totally integrated program for the handicapped provided by Cape Cod Vocational/Technical.



At Blackstone Valley Vocational/Technical, for example, the sending schools provide the academic program during the morning. The handicapped student is then transported to the Vocational/Technical school to receive the occupational education component during the late afternoon. At Blackstone Vocational/Technical the special needs student is given the opportunity to be enrolled in one of six identifiable vocational special areas. (1) Culinary Arts, (2) Automotive Technology, (3) Auto Body, (4) Machine Shop, (5) Plant Maintenance, (6) Mill and House Carpentry, (7) Painting and Decorating. Vocationally approved instructors from Blackstone's regular teaching staff provide the instruction within this program.

At Cape Cod Vocational/Technical a different approach to satisfying the occupational education needs of handicapped students is presently underway. The students are integrated into the mainstream of Cape Cod Vocational/Technical and receive supportive services. The project allows for the inclusion of the following supportive staff: consulting psychologist, a team leader, five certified teachers of children with special needs, nine instructional aides, and one speech therapist.

The presently approved projects are not only serving the needs of the respective school's own special needs students but will provide the ALPHA Group with the definitive data needed to assist other schools developing these programs. Within the ALPHA Group there exists a real sense of optimism regarding an expansion of occupational education programming for handicapped students. The numbers of requests for information and invitations to speak before occupational education school committees and professional groups is far beyond that anticipated by Mrs. Houston, Mr. Donoghue, Dr. Best and others of our ALPHA Group Staff.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

There was a time, and it wasn't long ago, when "occupational education" meant shop classes for boys and home economics for girls. Now occupational education covers a broad spectrum of classes, workshops and manpower programs ranging from data processing to marketing. Occupational education is becoming more and more important because many occupations are becoming increasingly complex and technical. This is true both for young people preparing for successful careers and for older people who have been out of the workforce for several years or whose job skills have become obsolete. Fortunately specific occupational training can be obtained through apprenticeship programs, junior colleges, secondary schools, post secondary schools, and adult manpower programs.

The key to survival in the work world is flexibility, the ability to channel what appear to be unmarketable skills and capabilities into profitable careers. The best way to increase flexibility and to assure that every individual realizes his right to work at gainful employment is through occupational education.

In assessing the needs of our target population, we need to take a very serious look at the need for occupational education information resources within the communities. Since the function of the Division of Occupational Education is to provide skill training to youth and adults which will prepare them for meaningful employment, more attention must be focused on the dissemination of vocational information. This information is crucial to people who are making career choices or choosing vocational education options. A large segment of the disadvantaged population is completely unaware of the new and emerging vocational training programs available in the public schools and throughout the communities.

Through my association and involvement in various community organizations and agencies, I have found many concerned, sincere and dedicated people who would function more effectively if certain negative invisible barriers were overcome. Some of these are the community agencies' isolation

from each other, the lack of communication and information sharing. A mechanism for compiling data on vocational education services offered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and categorized by city, community agency etc., would be of unparalleled value to the Division of Occupational Education and to the community.

However, parents also are a potential source of advice and guidance for students who must make educational choices. Parents frequently fail to attend meetings held at the city schools for various reasons: they feel they will be intimidated or turned off by school administrators or staff personnel, meetings are held in hostile areas, and the like. Perhaps many people view the lack of parental participation as a lack of concern or evidence of a "don't care" attitude. Would parents work extra long hours or work two jobs to provide shelter, food, clothing, and other necessities for their children if they weren't concerned or didn't care? Many parents are limited in their knowledge of vocational and career education. This occupational education information must reach both parents and students in order to aid them in making intelligent career decisions which, with full and accurate information, they are capable of making.

If the government reports are accurate, ten years from now 80% of our occupations will not require a college degree. Should not at least 80% of our youth and adults be equipped for the world of work?

The following are the questions most frequently asked by parents and students:

1. How can vocational education help me?
2. How do I know which vocational program I want?
3. Where do I find a counselor?
4. What kind of schools offer vocational training?
5. How can I evaluate a vocational training program?
6. Where can I get more information on vocational programs?
7. What should I know before enrolling in a private school?
8. What financial aids are available?
9. How will I find a job after I complete my training?

These questions must be answered through seminars, workshops, and meetings involving community agencies and parent groups. This approach would encourage and promote more cooperation between community and school and would result in more informed and useful decisions in the area of occupational education.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The purpose of evaluation is not to *prove* but to *improve*. Historically, evaluation in the Division of Occupational Education has been primarily limited to the monitoring of federal and state programs for the purpose of determining their compliance with various laws, regulations and rules. Although this is an important component of the total evaluation process, evaluation is more than monitoring. A comprehensive evaluation system begins with the planning of a program to determine whether certain needs have been assessed; whether the goals and objectives which follow from these needs are appropriate; whether the design of the program will meet the goals and objectives; and how the program will be assessed. The next phase in a comprehensive evaluation process is to determine the extent to which a program is being implemented as planned and to determine what changes, if any, must be made to keep the program on target. The last phase of evaluation involves assessing the outcomes of a program in relation to its intended goals and objectives. Emphasis on these three phases of evaluation constitutes a major thrust of the Bureau of Special Needs in administering programs for disadvantaged and handicapped persons.

If we examine each of these three phases in more detail, it will become readily apparent what the Bureau expects and how it will administer programs for persons with special needs.

Phase I — Program Review

During this phase, evaluation is defined as the process of assessing proposals submitted for funding under the Vocational Education Act against criteria established for this purpose. The Bureau is concerned with two general types of criteria in the selection of programs.

1. **Regulatory Criteria:** These are criteria which follow from state and federal laws and regulations applied to all programs regardless of the population served or the particular program identified. These include:

- A. Manpower Needs and Job Opportunities — proposed programs of occupational or vocational training designed to fit students with skills in areas of critical manpower need and employment opportunities.
- B. Differences in Vocational Education Needs — new, expanding or modified programs serving disadvantaged, handicapped, or regular students.
- C. Relative Ability to Provide Resources — programs which serve areas of persistent unemployment, densely populated cities with substantial poverty, and rural areas which lack the necessary resources to provide adequate training.
- D. Relative Costs of Programs, Services and Activities — the eligibility of a program to be reimbursed by the state for programs of occupational and vocational education.

Based upon a system of points, these regulatory criteria yield a total point value for each program reviewed. Awarding of funds is made on the basis of comparing total point values for all programs submitted in relation to the amount of funds available. Those programs with the highest point values are funded first, followed in order by those programs receiving the next highest point totals, and so forth until all funds have been expended.

- 2 | Program Eligibility Criteria: These criteria refer to the characteristics of a program as described in its narrative and related information. These include:
 - A. School/Community Needs Assessment — the extent to which the identified needs within a school/community are consistent with federal, state and local priorities for manpower and population needs.
 - B. Goals and Measurable Objectives — What the program intends to accomplish as outcomes which can be assessed. Primarily



these are outcomes related to student behavior and attitudes.

- C. Processes — the instructional strategies and supportive activities (e.g., guidance and counseling, placement, etc.) which are designed to produce the intended outcomes.

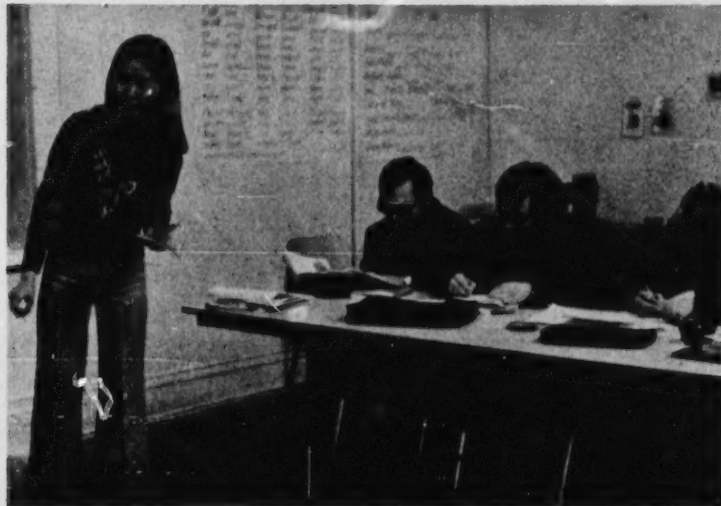
D. Resources — the people, materials, equipment and facilities which make the processes work (e.g., school and community).

A well designed proposal is a blueprint for action. That is, it tells in a step-by-step fashion "what, why, who, where, when, and how." The proposal is like any other type of plan—one rarely gets out of a program something other than was put into it.

A program which fails to describe in detail how it will operate cannot be evaluated effectively. Therefore, it is essential that any program considered for funding must meet criteria related to the program itself as well as criteria related to laws and regulations that apply to all programs.

Phase II — Process Review

Once a proposal has been accepted and funds provided, the program is ready to be implemented. Rarely does a program operate precisely as planned. There are many reasons why a program might have to change some of its processes or resources. Such changes, although they may be necessary for meeting the original goals and objectives, may throw a program



off schedule, or increase the emphasis on activities which may be less important. The process review focuses on observing the program in action and relating these observations to what was intended in the original proposal. It is during this process review that any changes made must be considered in light of the overall goals and objectives of the program. The process review is often the most time-consuming part of a total evaluation process. Furthermore, an adequate process review cannot be carried out without the support and input of the program. It is during this process review phase that the evaluation process becomes an interactive effort between the program staff and the administering agency.

A successful process review will provide documentation of precisely how a program was carried out including important changes that were made. On the basis of this process review, a final review is possible which assesses the outcomes that were achieved.

Phase III — Final Review

A final review usually includes not only what the program accomplished in terms of its own goals and objectives, but provides evidence regarding the extent to which laws and regulations were followed and to what extent the priorities of the Board of Education were achieved, at least as far as this program is concerned.

The final review phase concerns the outcomes of a program. It asks the question, "were the intended objectives achieved?" It is obvious that this question can only be answered by comparing the original objectives to those outcomes observed in the program. For example, if one objective of the program intends to place a certain number of students in full-time employment in jobs for which they were trained by the program, then at least one measure of success of the program would be the number of such students placed. It should be clear that the outcomes of the program are often limited to observations about what students are able to do at the end of the program. Although we are concerned with how teachers or others involved with the program may change, this is not the measure of a program's

This last phase typically results in a report that is prepared by the program staff with the assistance of the administrative agency. It is the final report that guides and affects the way the administrative agency will change or maintain its priorities in subsequent funding periods.

Summary

With an emphasis on these three phases in the evaluation process, the Bureau of Special Needs intends to provide a much more comprehensive process of accountability for the programs which it administers. At the same time, this process will likely lead to better and more informed relationships with its clients. These expectations, coupled with the limited professional staff available to the Bureau, will necessitate a much greater involvement on the part of program staff. It is our hope that this will lead to productive and rewarding outcomes for all involved.

